

Stoke Damerel Community College

Address: Somerset Place, Stoke, Plymouth, Devon, PL3 4BD

Unique reference number (URN): 136626

Inspection report: 24 March 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	● ● ● ●
Needs attention	● ● ●
Urgent improvement	

✔ **Safeguarding standards met**

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders identify pupils' individual needs quickly and accurately. They work collaboratively with a range of professionals to identify and implement strategies to help pupils overcome barriers to learning and wellbeing. Pupils attending the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) follow bespoke timetables that are aspirational and well matched to their needs. The school's 'team around the child' meetings regularly review and adjust the academic and pastoral support given to pupils. Leaders act with the best interests of pupils at heart.

Leaders have trained teachers how to support pupils with SEND. Typically, teachers use these strategies appropriately so that these pupils can learn as well as their peers. However, when teaching is not as effective, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Leaders use additional funding, such as the pupil premium, to support pupils. For example, by providing additional tutoring or mental health support. The school has recently opened its own internal alternative provision to support pupils to re-engage with education. The first pupils to attend this setting are highly positive about their experiences and the difference this is making to their attendance and attainment.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders act in the best interests of pupils. Leaders and those responsible for governance have correctly identified the development priorities for the school. In some areas, such as post-16, the positive impact of leaders' work is evident. Nevertheless, leaders need to make further progress elsewhere. The trust has recognised this and has provided additional resources to accelerate this improvement work. The trust is collaborating with other local education partners to address some of the challenges in the local area. For example, by sharing strategies to raise attendance.

The school, with the support of the trust, ensures that staff have professional learning opportunities to develop their expertise in their roles. Ongoing training and coaching are helping teachers, including those early in their careers, to improve their classroom practice. While many staff recognise how leaders are supporting their workload and wellbeing, this is not the experience of all. Leaders and those responsible for governance acknowledge the need to continue to review workload with staff, particularly when introducing changes.

The trustees and local governors are clear about their roles and work together to fulfil their statutory duties, including safeguarding. Together they monitor the quality of provision and both support and challenge leaders. This close monitoring of impact needs to continue as leaders further embed their school improvement strategies.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have planned a personal development curriculum that prepares pupils for healthy adult lives. For example, pupils learn about relationships, consent and online safety in an

age-appropriate way. Leaders adapt this curriculum adding topics that are relevant to pupils, such as the dangers of vaping. The physical education curriculum covers a wide range of activities to encourage pupils to be more active and enable them to develop leadership and teamwork skills.

The school's 'Modern Britain' curriculum teaches pupils about the important values that underpin our society. They see democracy in action within their own student council. Pupils learn about different religions and take part in debates about moral issues. However, a minority of pupils do not apply their learning about tolerance and respect for others to their own cooperation and conflict resolution.

The school encourages pupils to take part in a range of extra-curricular activities to develop their character. Pupils recognise the leadership skills they are developing when taking on roles such as school council representatives. These opportunities give pupils a voice to improve areas, such as the canteen, for the good of the whole school. Pupils are proud of their volunteering and charity fundraising efforts that help the local community. They also enjoy social events such as silent discos and fashion shows.

The careers programme is a strength of the school. It has been carefully designed to raise pupils' aspirations so that they are ambitious for their next steps into education, employment and training. Careers fairs, enterprise events and work experience give pupils multiple opportunities to learn about the world of work. Leaders ensure that pupils in years 11 and 13, particularly those who are disadvantaged, progress to education or employment that aligns with their aspirations and interests.

Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

Leaders have created an ambitious curriculum. It offers various qualifications and experiences. This helps students prepare for further study, training or work. The quality of the curriculum, alongside typically effective teaching, helps students succeed in their courses. By effectively adapting the curriculum, teachers meet the individual needs of students, such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They also give students the feedback needed to improve their work. Consequently, students make progress from their starting points across a range of A levels and technical qualifications.

Leaders have provided the wider opportunities that prepare students well for adult life. For example, students learn about healthy lifestyles, cooking and personal finance. Staff identify pupils who may benefit from additional support for either their learning or wellbeing. The effective pastoral support means that students feel known as individuals. Students value the extensive careers guidance they receive. This allows them to make informed choices about higher education, apprenticeships and employment. Students act as role models for younger pupils, for example, volunteering as subject mentors and running extra-curricular activities.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Pupils at the end of Year 11 do not achieve as highly in their qualifications as their peers nationally. For example, the proportion of pupils achieving a grade 4 in their English and mathematics GCSEs is persistently below the national average. This limits how well prepared some pupils are for the next stage of their education. Disadvantaged pupils achieve in line with their peers nationally in some, but not all, subjects. In contrast to these Year 11 outcomes, post-16 students are now more successful in their chosen courses.

Leaders quickly identify pupils who are not yet confident and accurate readers. They provide these pupils with effective support to develop their skills. However, leaders do not have high enough expectations for the quality of pupils' written work. For example, common mistakes in punctuation and spelling errors are not identified by teachers. Consequently, these mistakes persist, which hinder pupils' achievement in written examinations.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Attendance at this school is lower than the national average. However, because of the intensive work of leaders, attendance is improving for all groups of pupils. Staff work with families to identify the barriers to attendance. Staff and other professionals use this information to plan additional support. For example, pupils can attend the school's own alternative provision to help them return to regular attendance after a period of absence. Consequently, persistent absence at the school has significantly decreased over the last 3 years.

Some pupils treat their peers disrespectfully. This means that some pupils experience bullying and unkind behaviour. Pupils recognise that this behaviour is unacceptable and most report incidents to adults. While the school does not tolerate bullying, incidents are not resolved quickly enough. Pupils express frustration about this.

Leaders set high expectations for pupils' behaviour in class. Clear rules and routines are consistently applied alongside a range of rewards. Pupils appreciate that they can learn without disruption. They show a positive attitude towards their learning during their lessons.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Teaching is inconsistent across the curriculum, meaning pupils do not have a high-quality experience in every lesson. This particularly impacts pupils with barriers to their learning who do not always receive the adaptations they need to learn as well as they should. Leaders are improving the quality of teaching at the school. For example, recent training on strategies to check for understanding is helping teachers to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. However, leaders have not set high enough expectations for pupils' written work. Teachers do not consistently identify weaknesses in handwriting, spelling and punctuation. This means that pupils do not receive the feedback and support they need to improve their work.

The school, with the support of the trust, has planned a curriculum that is broad and ambitious. Teachers have the subject knowledge they need to deliver the chosen qualifications. Curriculum leaders identify potential improvements and adjust the curriculum accordingly. For example, recent improvements to the mathematics curriculum means that pupils are increasingly well prepared for their subsequent learning. Leaders have also prioritised reading across the curriculum. Pupils at the early stages of learning to read are effectively supported to catch up with their peers.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils typically enjoy their lessons at the school. Staff identify their individual barriers to learning and wellbeing so that pupils have the right help to overcome them. In many lessons, teachers adapt the curriculum to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged can learn as well as their peers. However, teachers do not help pupils to improve the standard of their written work. This means that pupils continue to make mistakes with spelling and punctuation. This hinders how well pupils can express their knowledge and understanding. Consequently, pupils in Year 11 do not achieve as highly as their peers nationally. In contrast, post-16 teaching is more effective, and students are successful in their chosen qualifications.

The high expectations for classroom behaviour means that lessons are not disrupted. Pupils typically feel safe and have trusted adults who they can share concerns with. Nevertheless, pupils do not show the same level of respect for each other. They experience bullying, derogatory comments and unkind behaviours around the school site. Pupils know this behaviour is unacceptable and normally report incidents. While staff take action, too many pupils experience issues that are not resolved quickly and effectively, and therefore this behaviour persists.

Increasingly, pupils are attending school more regularly. Pupils enjoy the range of clubs and trips available to develop their talents and interests, including sport and drama. Leaders help and encourage pupils to take part in these activities. Pupils are proud of their student leadership roles, such as house captains and sports leaders. They see these as opportunities to make the school better for everyone. Post-16 students act as role models by running activities and volunteering to help younger pupils. There is also particular excitement about the upcoming culture day organised by the diversity group.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that weaknesses in pupils' written accuracy, including spelling, punctuation and handwriting, are identified consistently and addressed systematically, so that pupils are able to demonstrate their knowledge effectively and achieve as well as they should in qualifications.
- Leaders should ensure that teachers consistently apply effective strategies and adaptations for pupils with barriers to learning, so that these pupils receive the support they need to achieve as well as their peers.

- Leaders should strengthen the consistency and impact of their work on behaviour so that there is a culture of mutual respect between pupils and bullying rarely occurs.
 - Leaders and governors should ensure that identified school improvement priorities are implemented consistently and evaluated rigorously, so that strategies lead to measurable improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment.
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About this inspection

The school is part of the Greenshaw Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, William Smith, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Karen Roche.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with school and trust leaders. Inspectors also spoke with teaching staff, support staff and representatives of those responsible for governance.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school has a specialist resource provision. This has 12 places for pupils with autism. There are currently 4 pupils attending this provision.

The school makes use of 7 alternative provisions, including 5 that are unregistered.

The Sixth Form is co-located on the same campus as Scott Medical and Healthcare College.

Headteacher: Anita Frier

Lead inspector:

Sara Berry, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Paul Nicholson, Ofsted Inspector

Gemma Tatlow, Ofsted Inspector

Sarah Parsons, Ofsted Inspector

Sophie Laing, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 24 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,284

Above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

1,680

Well above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

41.71%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

2.57%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

11.06%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Well above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

SpLD - Specific Learning Difficulty, VI - Visual Impairment, OTH - Other Difficulty/Disability, HI - Hearing Impairment, SLCN - Speech, language and Communication, ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder, SEMH - Social, Emotional and Mental Health, MSI - Multi-Sensory Impairment, PD - Physical Disability, MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulty, SLD - Severe Learning Difficulty, PMLD - Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty,

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	24.3%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	30.0%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	36.0%	45.3%	Close to average

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	35.9	46.0	Below
2023/24 (final)	38.5	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	43.1	46.3	Close to average

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.19	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	0.21	-0.03	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	11.1%	25.8%	Below
2023/24 (final)	22.0%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	17.1%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	29.8	34.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	31.5	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	33.5	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.67	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.27	-0.57	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	11.1%	53.1%	-42.0 pp
2023/24 (final)	22.0%	53.1%	-31.2 pp
2022/23 (final)	17.1%	52.4%	-35.3 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	29.8	50.4	-20.6
2023/24 (final)	31.5	50.0	-18.5

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	33.5	50.3	-16.8

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.67	0.16	-0.83
2022/23 (final)	-0.27	0.17	-0.43

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	91%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	91%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	93%	94%	Average

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	30.23	34.99	Below
2023/24 (final)	23.78	34.38	Below
2022/23 (final)	19.53	34.16	Below

A-level value added

A score showing students' progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	-0.2	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	-0.5	0.0	Below

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	12.4%	8.1%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	14.7%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	13.8%	9.0%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	35.0%	21.9%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (3 term)	42.6%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	43.8%	26.5%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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